

**April 2013**



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## **Merced-Mariposa County FSA Updates**

Dear PRODUCERS: Welcome to the new GovDelivery bulletins and updates service from your Merced-Mariposa County FSA Office. Note that you are welcome to request to receive bulletins from more than one state and/or county and can add or remove individual subscriptions at any time.

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### **Office Location:**

2926 G Street, Suite 103  
Merced, CA 95340-2110

### **Contact Information:**

Phone (209)722-4119 ext. 2  
Fax (209)722-0974

### **Hours:**

Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### **County Committee (COC):**

Arthur W. Richards, Chair  
RoseAnn Serrano, Vice Chair  
Simon Vander Woude, Member  
Pasquale Palazzo, Member  
Jose D. Vazquez, Advisor

### **Farm Program Staff:**

Joe Grillo, CED  
Lydia Swilley, PT  
Gizela Gover, PT  
Lenai Mull, PT  
Tina Frey, PT

## **Hispanic Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process Extended**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced the extension of the voluntary claims process for Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades. All claims must now be filed by May 2013.

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied his or her application for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

Claimants may register for a claims package by calling the telephone number below Monday through Friday 9a.m. to 8p.m. Eastern Time or by downloading the forms from the website.

Website: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)  
Phone: 1-888-508-4429  
Fax: (885)626-8343  
Email: [claims@hwfr.org](mailto:claims@hwfr.org)

**Claims Period: September 24, 2012 – May 1, 2013**

## **CRP Sign-Up Starts Soon**

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation

#### **Farm Loan Staff:**

LaVon Treasure, FLM  
Aileen Garcia, FLO  
Laura Westerfield, FLOT  
Phyllis Boyle, PT

Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract (10-15 years.)



Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on September 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs visit your Farm Service Agency Service Center or [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

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## **Acreage Certification**

After spring planting, producers should certify their 2013 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops enrolled in programs other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports are to be certified by the March 15th deadline on orchards and a July 15th deadline on all other crops.

Acreage reports on crops covered by NAP are due in the county Office by the earlier of the acreage reporting date, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

If you have any questions regarding when your crop should be reported, please contact our office at (209)722-4119 ext. 2 and a member of our staff will be happy to assist you.

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## **Farm Record Changes**

**June 1, 2013**, is the deadline to provide changes to your farm records at the local FSA office for the current crop year. If you are changing your operation entity type, adding or dropping cropland or farms, or adding entities to your operation, contact our office at (209)722-4119 ext. 2 before June 1, 2013.

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## **Microloans Are Cultivating Big Dreams on a Small Scale**

Microloans are helping small niche and beginning farmers and ranchers meet their goals. The less burdensome and more simplified loan process allows producers to apply for a maximum of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses, essential tools, irrigation, delivery vehicles and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. Producers interested in applying for a microloan should contact our office at (209)722-4119 ext. 2 to make an appointment with a Farm Loan Officer.

Read two stories showing how microloans are helping producers across the U.S. expand their operations:

- 1) [Thanks Mr. President: Niche Farmers Send Obama Appreciation Letter for Boosting Their Business.](#)
- 2) [Small Farmer finds Success with FSA Microloan Program.](#)

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